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RUZENA PELANTOVA

FEBRUARY 26 (legislative day, JANUARY 29), 1951.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. McCARRAN, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 249]

The Committee on the Judiciary, to which was referred the bill (S. 249) for the relief of Ruzena Pelantova, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to grant the status of permanent residence in the United States to Ruzena Pelantova. The bill provides for an appropriate quota deduction and payment of the required visa fee and head tax.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The beneficiary of the bill is a 64-year-old native of Bohemia who last entered the United States as a visitor on September 21, 1949. She has previously been in the United States, both as a student and as a visitor. She was sentenced to 8 years at hard labor by the Nazi government following her conviction for underground work against that regime. She was liberated from a concentration camp in Bavaria in May 1945 by the American forces. She is supporting herself through lectures which she gives under the auspices of the Free Europe Association, Inc., and from the sale of scripts to the Voice of America.

A letter dated December 14, 1950, to the chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary from the Deputy Attorney General with reference to S. 3782, which was a bill introduced in the Eighty-first Congress for the relief of the same alien, reads as follows:

DECEMBER 14, 1950.

Hon. PAT McCARRAN,
*Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR SENATOR: This is in response to your request for the views of the Department of Justice relative to the bill (S. 3782) for the relief of Ruzena Pelantova.

The bill would provide that, in the administration of the immigration laws, Ruzena Pelantova shall be considered to have been lawfully admitted into the United States for permanent residence as of the date of her last entry, upon payment of the required head tax and visa fee. It would also direct the Secretary of State to instruct the quota-control officer to deduct one number from the non-preference category of the appropriate immigration quota for the first year such quota is available.

The files of the Immigration and Naturalization Service of this Department disclose that the alien is a widow and a native of Bohemia, having been born on March 13, 1886, in Sulislav, Bohemia. She claims to be stateless. Mrs. Pelantova entered the United States at the port of New York on September 21, 1949, when she was admitted under section 3 (2) of the Immigration Act of 1924 for a temporary period to expire on March 20, 1950, which was subsequently extended until June 25, 1950. The alien was previously in the United States as a student in 1920, attending the University of Chicago until August of 1921, as a visitor from April until October of 1925, and again as a visitor from October until November of 1946. She is presently considered as being unlawfully in this country, having overstayed the extension of the temporary period granted to her.

Mrs. Pelantova was graduated from the Pilzen Teachers' College, Pilzen; Bohemia, in 1905, and has devoted much of her life to social welfare work. Outstanding employments have been with the Czechoslovak Red Cross under Dr. Alice Masaryk, as adviser to the architect and manager of the Masaryk Homes for Aged Incurables and Children, as chief of the social service department, city of Prague, and as director of the social service department, Czech underground movement. As a result of her conviction by the Nazi Government for underground work against their regime and for treason against the Nazi Protektorat, she was sentenced to 8 years at hard labor, and was finally liberated from a concentration camp in Bavaria by the American forces on May 1, 1945.

The files further reflect that the alien resides at the Lennox Hill Settlement House, in New York City, exchanging several hours of her services each week for part of her room and board. She is not steadily employed but pays her expenses with money realized from occasional lectures which she gives under the auspices of the Free Europe Association, Inc., and from the sale of scripts to the Voice of America. Mrs. Pelantova has no property, either real or personal, of value, in this country, and stated that she is not indebted financially, and has never been the recipient of public welfare, either in this country or Europe.

The quota of Czechoslovakia, to which the alien is chargeable, is oversubscribed and an immigration visa is not readily obtainable. Her case is similar to those of other aliens who wish to obtain the benefits of residence in the United States but who are unable to obtain immigration visas. Many of these aliens are unable for political reasons to return to their native countries at this time, and have found refuge in foreign lands, where they are awaiting their regular turn for the issuance of immigration visas which will permit them to enter the United States for permanent residence. The record presents no facts which would justify granting Mrs. Pelantova a preference over those aliens who remain abroad and follow the procedure prescribed by our immigration laws. To enact the proposed measure would probably encourage other aliens to enter the United States for temporary periods and then claim that they are political refugees who are unable to return to their native countries.

Accordingly, the Department of Justice is unable to recommend enactment of this bill.

Yours sincerely,

PEYTON FORD,
Deputy Attorney General.

Senator Edward J. Thye, the author of the bill, has submitted the following information in connection with the case:

UNITED STATES SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY,
Washington, D. C., June 30, 1950.

Hon. PAT McCARRAN,
Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary,
Washington, D. C.

DEAR SENATOR McCARRAN: To furnish the Senate Committee on the Judiciary with the information customarily desired in connection with private bills relating to immigration matters, I wish to present the following as sponsor of S. 3782, a bill for the relief of Ruzena Pelantova:

1. A refugee from Communist-dominated Czechoslovakia, Mrs. Pelantova came to the United States on a nonimmigration visa, No. [REDACTED], application [REDACTED]. A further statement with reference to the circumstances surrounding her escape from Czechoslovakia and her coming to the United States is attached herewith.

2. Her present activities are lecturing among Czechoslovakian and American groups, writing articles and radio scripts, all of them dealing with the present conditions in Czechoslovakia and featuring the present terrorist Communist regime in that country.

3. She is earning her living by means of such writing and lecturing and is not dependent upon any other person for her support.

4. She is not engaged in any activity, political or otherwise, injurious to the American public interest, and her actions are in fact directed only toward a constructive contribution to the United States as a free nation.

5. She has not been convicted of an offense under Federal or State law.

In further support of S. 3782, I wish to submit the following additional data:

(a) Extracts from the indictment against anti-Communist persons in Czechoslovakia, including Mrs. Pelantova;

(b) Outline of the details of the escape of Mrs. Pelantova from Czechoslovakia;

(c) Memorandum furnished by Mrs. Pelantova with reference to the five questions submitted to the sponsors of the bill by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary;

(d) Copy of curriculum vitae of Mrs. Pelantova; and

(e) Copy of press release which I issued at the time I introduced the bill for the relief of this distinguished Czechoslovakian refugee.

I respectfully request favorable action by the Senate Committee on the Judiciary on S. 3782, as I believe that this is an unusually worthy case, meriting the relief that would be afforded by the passage of a private bill.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD J. THYE, *United States Senator.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., September 20, 1950.

MR. ROBERT C. ALEXANDER,
Assistant Chief, Visa Division,
Department of State, Washington, D. C.

DEAR MR. ALEXANDER: I am writing you in the interests of Mme. Ruzena Pelantova, in whose behalf I have introduced S. 3782, a bill to legalize her entry into the United States for permanent residence.

A refugee from Communist-dominated Czechoslovakia, Mme. Pelantova came to the United States following her escape to Germany, on a visitor's visa, No. [REDACTED], arriving at LaGuardia Field in New York City on September 21, 1949. Her permit, to March 20, 1950, was extended to June 25, 1950, and just prior to that time I introduced S. 3782 as it was apparent that her return to her homeland would constitute a threat to her freedom and life.

Mme. Pelantova was a well-known teacher, social worker, and Government official in Czechoslovakia prior to World War II. During the war, when the Nazis were in control of Czechoslovakia, she was active for 4 years as director of the social service department of the Czech underground movement in feeding and caring for underground men and their families. She spent the period of 1943 to 1945 in a Nazi concentration camp, but upon the liberation of Czechoslovakia, returned to her native country and became the first woman to be deputy lord mayor of Prague. As a member of the Benes-Masaryk Party, she subsequently fled

Czechoslovakia last year and came to the United States through the intercession of American friends.

Her present activities are lecturing among Czechoslovakian and American groups, writing articles and radio scripts, all of them dealing with the present conditions in Czechoslovakia and featuring the present terrorist Communist regime in that country. She has recently been invited to give a series of 25 lectures in Canada against communism, beginning October 15, but is unable to leave the United States because of the uncertainty of her status pending the adoption of the private legislation pending in her behalf.

The activities and speeches of this distinguished woman are in the national interest in focusing attention on Communist methods and objectives, and her proposed visit to Canada would contribute to the same constructive purpose in creating an awareness of the dangers and threats of this foreign ideology by one who was victimized by it because of her belief in freedom and democracy. It would seem to me that every effort should be made, consistent with our laws, to make it possible for Mme. Pelantova to accept the speaking engagements in Canada without jeopardizing her return to the United States to await the congressional decision on the private legislation affecting her.

S. 3782 was introduced for her relief after investigation appeared to show that there was no administrative relief either under the Displaced Persons Act or the established immigration laws. Since obtaining favorable action on a bill of this character is a rather long process, it has not been possible to bring the matter to a conclusion up to this time. The Senate Committee on the Judiciary is at present awaiting a report from the Department of Justice.

My purpose in writing you is to ask that Mme. Pelantova's case be carefully examined to determine if it is possible to grant her necessary permission that will enable her to visit Canada and to return to the United States upon the conclusion of her lecture schedule. I am confident you will give the matter sympathetic consideration, in the light of the objectives of a free government which we here seek to strengthen, and that everything possible will be done for this distinguished leader of anti-Communist thought. May I ask you to please advise me as soon as possible concerning Mme. Pelantova's request for permission to visit Canada under the circumstances I have outlined.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD J. THYE, *United States Senator.*

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, October 9, 1950.

HON. EDWARD J. THYE,
United States Senator.

MY DEAR SENATOR THYE: Reference is made to your letter of September 20, 1950, and to several telephone conversations held between a member of the staff of your office and a member of the staff of the Visa Division concerning the case of Mme. Ruzena Pelantova.

From the information furnished in your letter and in the telephone conversations, it seemed likely that Mme. Pelantova may qualify for classification under section 3 (c) of the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, as amended, but in order to obtain a visa under section 3 (c), it will be necessary for her to leave the United States and to apply to an American consular officer abroad. Mme. Pelantova may possibly qualify for classification under section 2 (d) of the act, but the criteria to be followed in determining whether aliens are classifiable under section 2 (d) have not been agreed upon by the Department of State and the Department of Defense. Should she so desire, her case will be given consideration under section 2 (d) when the criteria have been agreed upon. It would also be necessary for her to leave the United States in order to apply for a visa under section 2 (d).

Concerning Mme. Pelantova's desire to proceed to Canada for the purpose of giving a series of lectures and then returning to the United States, I have to say that the Department communicated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Department of Justice regarding that matter and was informed that under existing regulations the Department of Justice is not in a position to guarantee that Mrs. Pelantova would be readmitted into the United States as a temporary visitor whether or not she is in possession of a temporary visitor's visa.

Sincerely yours,

H. J. L'HEUREUX,
Chief, Visa Division.

In the Prague trial of the 13 Czechoslovaks accused of conspiracy against the Communist regime because of their participation in anti-Communist resistance, 2 of the accused sentenced to death and 2 to life imprisonment were charged with maintaining contact with Pelantova, who was described as the "imperialistic agent supplying information to United States diplomats."

EXTRACTS FROM THE INDICTMENT

"Horakova established the principal organ for the coordination of the activities of all antistate organizations * * * she maintained close contact with the imperialist agents Zenkl¹ and Ripka² * * * who were later joined by Pelantova. This was Horakova's main task. She kept and maintained contact with them through various channels. (Horakova was sentenced to death.)

"Zeminova was accused of maintaining contact with the Council of Free Czechoslovakia in the United States. She was adjudged guilty of sending secret information to western imperialists through the agents Zenkl and Pelantova. (Zeminova was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment—at the age of 68.)

"Kleinerova hated the popular democratic regime. With Pelantova she created an antistate group into which she drew a number of like-minded officials of the former National Socialist (President Benes') Party. She was instrumental in the illegal escape of Pelantova. She secured a great amount of intelligence material which she transmitted abroad, to Zenkl and Ripka. (Kleinerova was sentenced to life imprisonment.)

"Pecl passed information, through Kleinerova, to Zenkl and Pelantova. Aided by Kleinerova, Pecl drafted memoranda for the so-called Council of Free Czechoslovakia, an organization rallying together criminals who have fled to our enemies abroad. The memoranda were sent through the Norwegian Legation to Zenkl and Pelantova."

[For immediate release, June 20, 1950]

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE OFFICE OF UNITED STATES SENATOR EDWARD J. THYE, REPUBLICAN, OF MINNESOTA

Senator Thye has introduced a private bill to legalize the entry into the United States for permanent residence of Mme. Ruzena Pelantova, a noted Czech woman refugee. Mme. Pelantova is facing deportation to her native country following the expiration of her visitor's visa on June 25 and intercession was made in her behalf to Senator Thye by a personal friend, Mrs. F. Peavey Heffelfinger of Minneapolis, who had met the famous Czech leader on a recent visit to Europe.

Mme. Pelantova was a well-known teacher, social worker, and government official in Czechoslovakia prior to the war. During the war, when the Nazis were in control of Czechoslovakia, she was active for 4 years as director of the social service department of the Czech underground movement in feeding and caring for underground men and their families. She spent the period of 1943 to 1945 in a Nazi concentration camp, but upon the liberation of Czechoslovakia, returned to her native country and became the first deputy lord mayor of Prague.

As a member of the Benes-Masaryk Party, she fled Czechoslovakia last year and came to the United States through the intercession of American friends. Because of the threat to her freedom and life if she were forced to return to her Communist-dominated homeland, Senator Thye has offered a private immigration bill to permit her to remain in the United States and eventually become a citizen.

In connection with the above-quoted letter from the Chief of the Visa Division concerning possible relief available to the beneficiary of the bill it has been ascertained that, after full investigation of the facts, no administrative relief is presently available in this case.

The committee, after consideration of all the facts in the case, is of the opinion that the bill S. 249 should be enacted.

¹ Petr Zenkl, Ph. D., was Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, prior to the Communist coup; now the chairman of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, Washington, D. C.

² Hubert Ripka, Ph. D., was Minister of Foreign Trade; now a member of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia; and professor at New School of Social Research, New York City.

